

The Helen Keller Museum

Showcasing the indomitable human spirit



Courtesy of the AFB
Helen Keller Archives

**“The only thing worse than being blind
is having sight but no vision.”**

—Helen Keller



**MUSEUM OF
THE AMERICAN
PRINTING HOUSE
FOR THE BLIND**



The Museum of the American Printing House for the Blind (MAPH) proposes creating the Helen Keller Museum in order to engage guests with the history of literacy, learning and rehabilitation of people who are blind or visually impaired, with the goal of opening their minds to a new way of looking at disability.

FEASIBILITY STUDY



IN 2018, ABOUT 23,000 PEOPLE EXPERIENCED THE MAPH COLLECTION THROUGH ONSITE VISITS AND OFFSITE OUTREACH.

WHO ARE MAPH VISITORS?

Visually impaired related	8%
Student groups	41%
Families and individuals	31%
Bus tours	13%
Scouts	7%



ABOUT APH

The American Printing House for the Blind was founded in 1858 to supply accessible educational materials for students who were blind or visually impaired.

Today it is the oldest company of its kind in America and the largest in the world that supplies educational and daily living aids for people who are blind.

The Opportunity

Recently, MAPH was presented with the opportunity to house the entire collection of the Helen Keller archives.

The collection's keeper – the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) – determined we were best positioned to share this collection and its incredible story with the world, choosing MAPH over Radcliffe College (Hellen Keller's alma mater), the Smithsonian, and The New York Historical Society.

MAPH was chosen by AFB for a few important reasons:

- ✔ We understand the importance of keeping the entire collection together.
- ✔ We intend to keep the Helen Keller archives a permanent installation, not a temporary exhibit.
- ✔ We agree the archives will be on loan from AFB for 10 years with potential for a permanent agreement.

About the Museum of the American Printing House for the Blind (MAPH)

American Printing House for the Blind created its award-winning museum in 1994 to preserve the history of the blindness field and complement the company's factory tour program.

Over the past 25 years, MAPH has absorbed the archival collections of a variety of other blindness organizations. Today, it has the most comprehensive and best-cataloged collection of its kind in the world.

Key examples of the current collection include:

- ✔ Stevie Wonder's piano used at the Michigan School for the Blind.
- ✔ The only copy of the first edition of Louis Braille's 1829 Code on public display (only six copies of this book exist).
- ✔ Tactile maps and globes from early makers such as Martin Kunz, as well as Samuel Howe's 1834 world atlas.
- ✔ A copy of the first book ever embossed for people who are blind or visually impaired, created by Valentin Hauy.
- ✔ The Hall Stereotyper, the first example of mass production in braille.
- ✔ The finest collection of talking book records and machinery, including pioneering cassette and reel-to-reel examples.

The creation of the Helen Keller Museum at MAPH is a tremendous opportunity to change perceptions of blindness.

Helen Keller was a pivotal figure and thought leader in disability rights, civil rights, labor rights, and women's rights in the first half of the 20th Century – in spite of becoming deaf and blind at 19 months old. She continues to be an extraordinary example today of success in overcoming tremendous obstacles.

By partnering with AFB, we can bring this rarely shared collection into the light to be explored by thousands annually through accessible, interactive exhibits that use Helen and Anne Sullivan's stories to touch visitors' hearts and minds.

Creation of an established and permanent **Helen Keller Museum** will ensure we celebrate her life and that of many others who have conquered adversity. This includes generations of teachers, students, and parents who developed ingenious adaptations to live with blindness.



Courtesy of the AFB
Helen Keller Archives

SUPPORTING LOCAL TOURISM

Louisville boasts a vibrant tourism industry, responsible for bringing about 16.4 million people from around the globe to visit every year.

This means an enhanced and dynamic new Museum would have the potential to reach thousands more people annually to change perceptions of blindness.



CONCEPT RENDERINGS

Next steps for the Helen Keller Museum

1. The current MAPH exhibit space **must be expanded** to accommodate the Helen Keller archives, provide more storage for the MAPH collection, and create accessible, high-quality public exhibition spaces. This effort would include **completion of infrastructure updates** to the entire APH building – built between 1883 and 1923 – to ensure it can continue to serve our mission for another 100 years.
2. With the expanded collection comes new opportunities to tell not only Helen Keller's unique story but also the stories of people who are blind and visually impaired everywhere – and the inventions and people who have changed lives. We must **invest in modern, dynamic exhibits** that engage visitors and make the lessons relatable.
3. Finally, we propose **raising permanent endowment funds** to support the museum's mission and ensure its message is shared in perpetuity.

MAPH/Helen Keller Museum Project

\$15-20 MILLION

1 Museum expansion and accessibility: Improving access to the lessons of the past.

\$8-11 MILLION

Under this concept, we propose adding approximately 50,000 sq. ft. to our current building, 6,500 of which would be dedicated to the Helen Keller Museum.

- Space to host **educational programs** and meetings for 50–100 people
- Additional **artifact storage space** with modern security and environmental controls
- **Quiet, permanent exhibit spaces** that can accommodate large groups, especially those who are blind or visually impaired and rely on their hearing
- **Temporary exhibition spaces** allowing us to host longer exhibits such as the annual Insights Art competition
- A more **prominent place for the Hall of Fame** for Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field
- **A gift shop**
- **Infrastructure updates** to include a new HVAC system for the entire APH building, new roof with potential for a rain garden, remodeled interior spaces and a public art installation in front of the building.

2 Modern, dynamic exhibits: Bringing stories to life.

\$3 MILLION

3 Museum sustainability: Ensuring access to the lessons of the past.

\$5 MILLION

Currently, MAPH is solely dependent on funding from APH as designated by the president and board leadership. Having an endowment dedicated just to the museum would reduce this reliance and provide long-term sustainability. **It would make MAPH a focal point of the American Printing House for the Blind.**

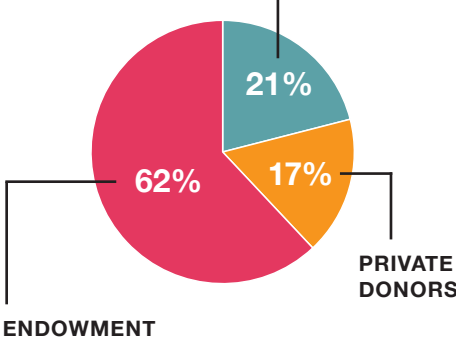
At an anticipated 4% return on investment, the \$5 million endowment would cover the annual cost of museum staff salaries.

MAPH/Helen Keller Museum projected operations and revenue

We estimate that the expanded MAPH will cost \$270,000-300,000 annually to operate, with staffing expected to be 40-60% of the total budget.

MAPH PROJECTED REVENUE

EARNED SOURCES – RETAIL,
PROGRAMS, MEMBERSHIP,
FACILITY RENTALS



PROJECTED BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

- ✓ Dramatically enhanced capacity for impactful storytelling.
- ✓ Expanded visitation leading to more opportunities to change attitudes about blindness.
- ✓ Improved outcomes for visitors of all abilities.
- ✓ Enhanced capacity for hosting accessible educational programs and meetings.
- ✓ Larger space for additional collections.
- ✓ Modern, organized museum storage space.
- ✓ More dynamic factory tours.



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